

**Annual Report on the Declining Birthrate  
2021(Summary)**

**June 2021  
Cabinet Office**

This document is based on the provisions of Article 9 of the Basic Act for Measures to Cope with Society with Declining Birthrate (Act No. 133 of 2003), and it is intended to make a report on the general situation of the declining birthrate and an overview of the measures taken to address the declining birthrate.

# Annual Report on the Declining Birthrate 2021

**This report is submitted to the Diet each year in line with the Basic Act for Measures to Cope with Society with Declining Birthrate. This is the 18<sup>th</sup> edition.**

<The Basic Act for Measures to Cope with Society with Declining Birthrate> (Act No. 133 of 2003)

Article 9 The government must submit to the Diet each year a report concerning the state of the declining birthrate and an outline of measures it has taken to deal with the declining birthrate.

## Part 1 Current Status of Countermeasures against the Declining Birthrate

### Chapter 1 Current Status of the Declining Birthrate

1. Trends and projections of Japan's total population and demographic structure
2. Trends in the number of live births and birthrates
3. Trends in marriage and childbirth
4. Attitudes towards marriage
5. Attitudes towards childbirth and childrearing
6. Prefectural comparison

### Chapter 2 Efforts to Deal with the Declining Birthrate

#### Section 1 Past efforts

Section 2 The effects of COVID-19 on countermeasures against the declining birthrate and responses to these (**Special Topic**)

## Part 2 Implementation Status of Countermeasures against the Declining Birthrate

### Chapter 1 Key Challenges

Section 1 Creation of an environment in which the marriage/childrearing generation can envisage prospects into the future

Section 2 Responding to needs of diversified childrearing families

Section 3 Promotion of meticulous initiatives appropriate to regional circumstances

Section 4 Creation of a society friendly to marriage, pregnancy/childbirth, children and childrearing

Section 5 Enthusiastic utilization of science and technology results and new resources

### Chapter 2 Measures at each life stage

Section 1 Before marriage

Section 2 Marriage

Section 3 Pregnancy and childbirth

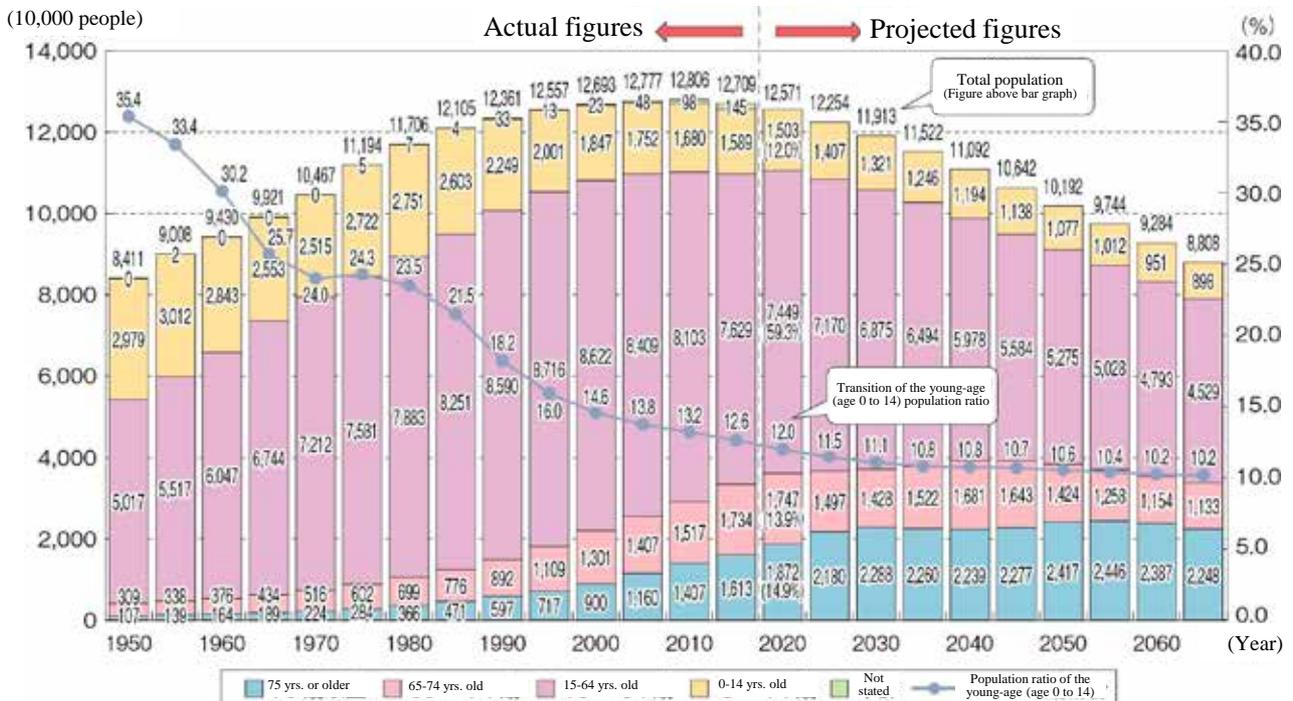
Section 4 Childrearing

## Topics

- Promotion of initiatives under the Outline of Measures for a Society with Declining Birthrate (main initiatives for FY2021)
- Establishment of taxation measures relating to childrearing support costs
- Improvements of Newlyweds Lifestyle Support Program
- National Council on Marriage Support
- Participation in childrearing by fathers in the new lifestyle
- Towards new developments in multifunctional regional childrearing support
- Diversification of childrearing providers in the community through the participation of NPOs and older generations
- Promotion of declining birthrate measures appropriate to regional circumstances
- Family Day & Family Week
- The International Attitudes Survey on the Society with a Declining Birthrate
- Towards the development of a working environment in which infertility treatment is easy to undergo

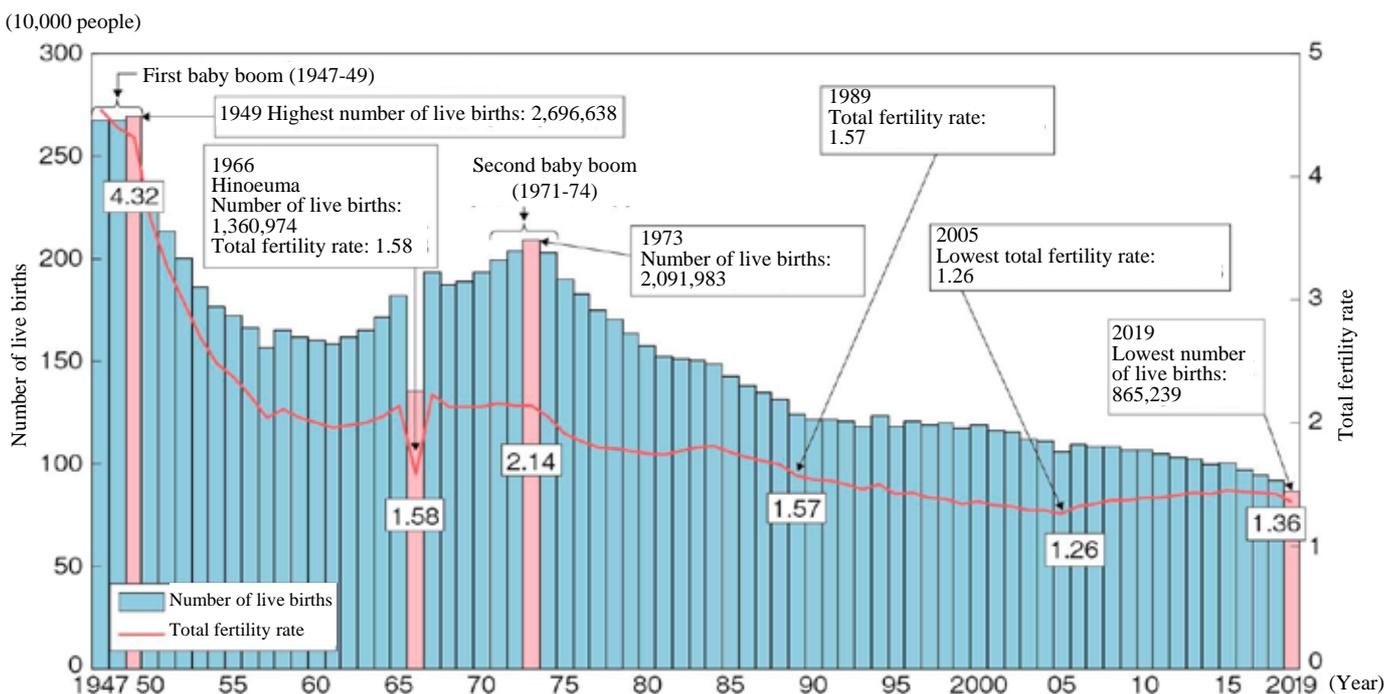
## Chapter 1 Current Status of the Declining Birthrate

- Japan's total population was 125.71 mil. as of 2020.
- The young-age (age 0 to 14), working-age (age 15 to 64), and those aged 65 or older populations are 15.03 mil., 74.49 mil. and 36.19 mil., respectively, being equivalent to 12.0%, 59.3%, and 28.8% of the total population.



Source: The results are based on MIC's Population Census up to 2015; as for 2020, MIC's "Population Estimates" (as of October 1, 2020 (estimates based on the 2015 Population Census)); and as for 2025 onward, National Institute of Population and Social Security Research, "Population Projections for Japan (the 2017 estimate) for the medium-fertility and medium-mortality projections.  
 Note: Percentages are rounded to the nearest second decimal place and shown to the first decimal place. As a result the totals of breakdowns may not add up to exactly 100% in some cases.

- The number of live births in 2019, which was 865,239, was the lowest on record (the "860,000 shock").  
 Note: This figure lies within the range of the future medium-fertility projection (904,342 people) and low-fertility projection (821,121 people) for the total population estimate.
- The total fertility rate in 2019 was 1.36, which was down by 0.06 percentage points compared to the previous year.

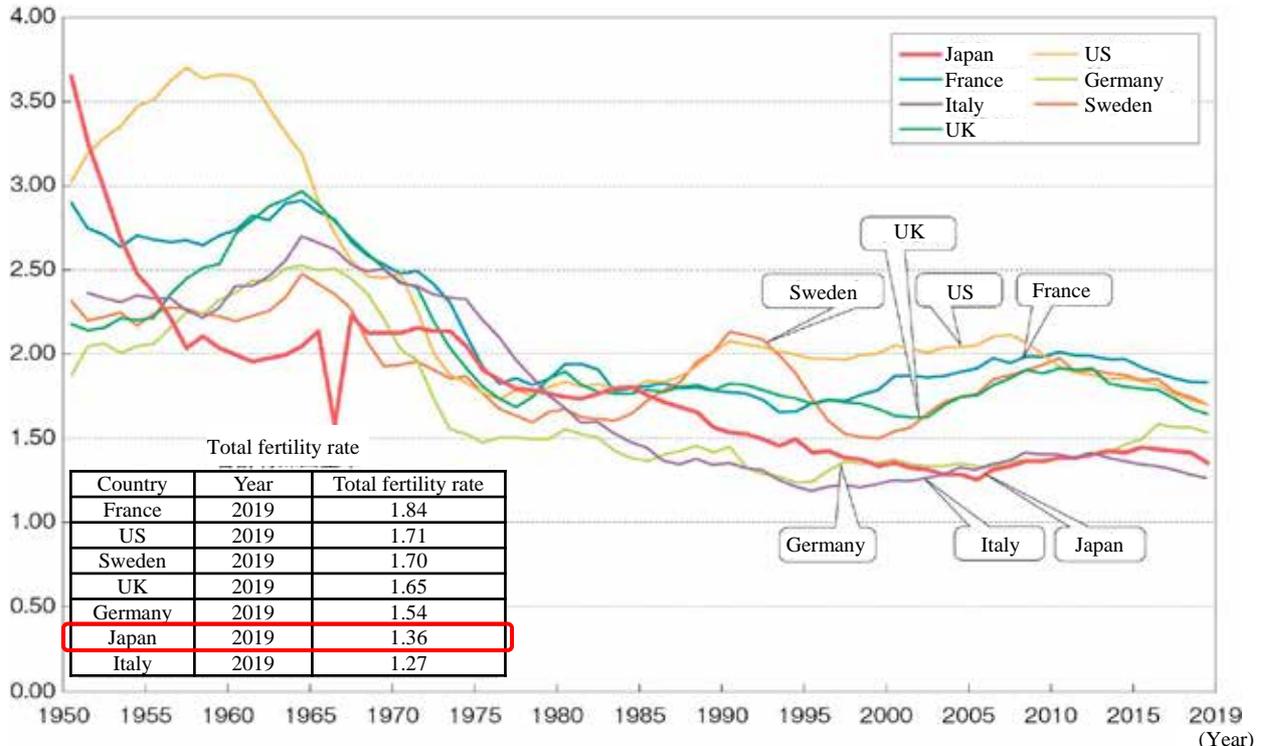


Source: Vital Statistics, MHLW

# Part 1 Current Status of Countermeasures against the Declining Birthrate

## Chapter 1 Current Status of the Declining Birthrate

- The total fertility rate in some countries (France, the US, Sweden, the UK, Germany and Italy) declined from 1970 to around 1980 as a whole. In some countries, however, the rate recovered since around 1990. However, in those countries too, the fertility rate started to decline once more from around 2010.

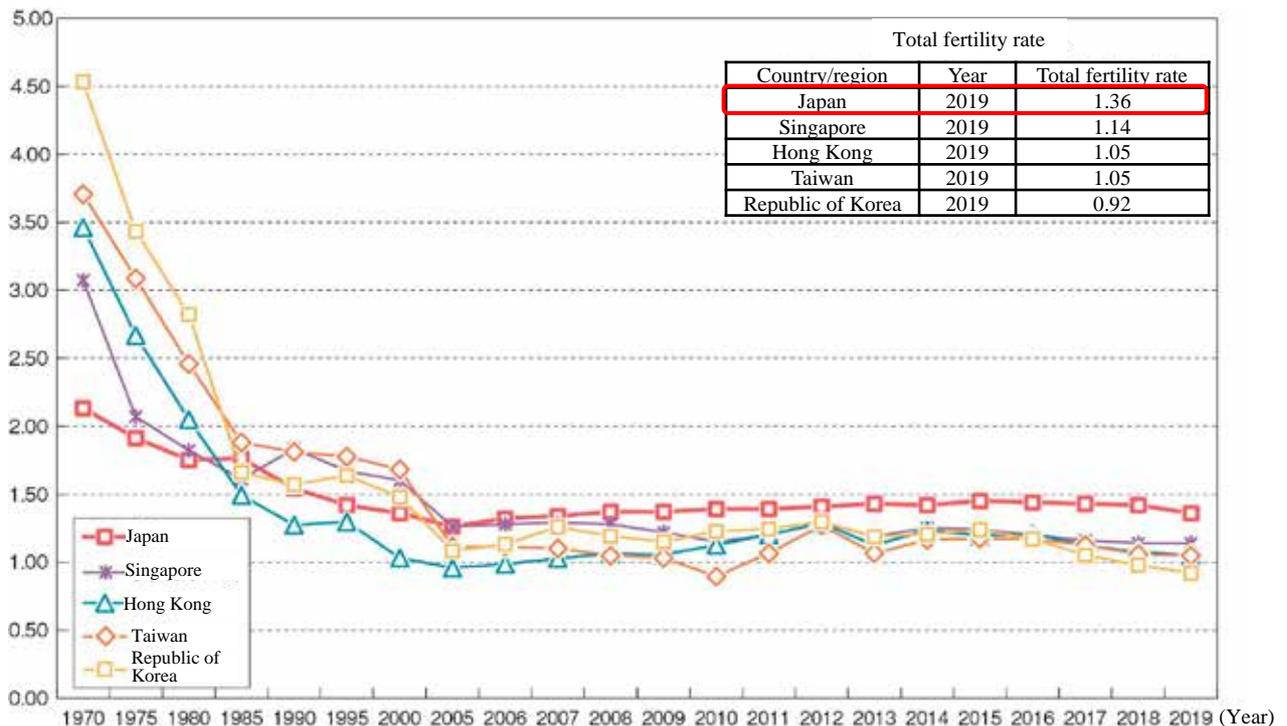


Source: The numbers regarding countries other than Japan were from sources including Demographic Yearbook by the United Nations for the years up to 1959, OECD Family Database for the years between 1960 and 2018, and the statistics in each country for the year 2019. The numbers regarding Japan are based on "Vital Statistics" by the MHLW.

Note: The figures for the rate in France in 2019 are provisional.

Note: In 2020, the rates were: 1.83 in France (provisional), 1.64 in the US (provisional), 1.66 in Sweden, 1.60 in the UK (provisional) and 1.24 in Italy (provisional).

- Looking at the transition of the total fertility rate in Singapore, Hong Kong, Taiwan, and Republic of Korea, among the countries and regions in Asia, all maintained a level higher than Japan as of the year 1970. However, they have shown a declining trend, and today the total fertility rate in these countries and regions falls below the replacement-level fertility rate.



Source: The numbers are cited from statistics in each country and region. As for Japan the numbers are based on "Vital Statistics" by the MHLW.

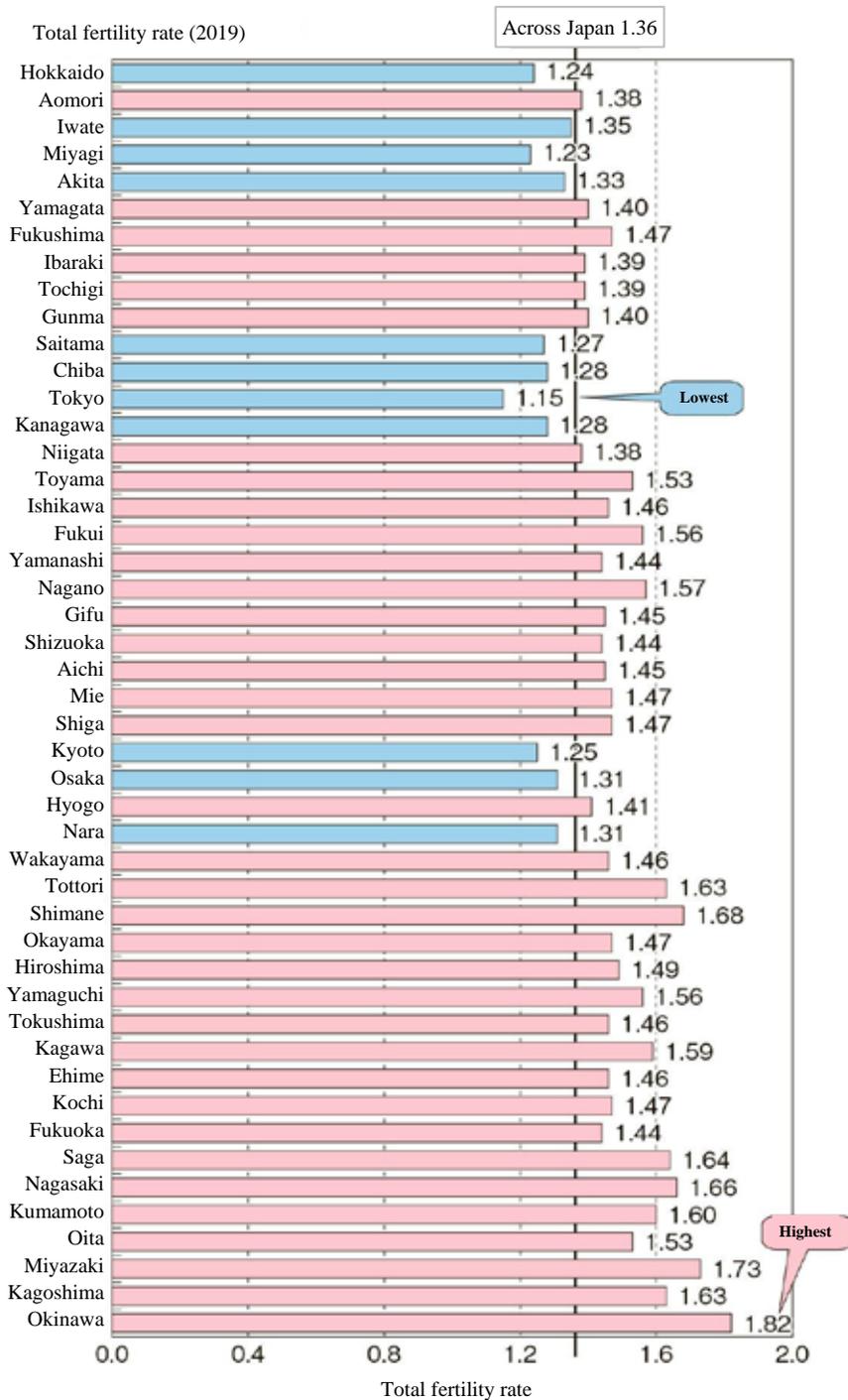
Note: The figures for Hong Kong in 1970 are 1971's. The figures for Taiwan in 1970 are 1971's, for 1975 they are 1976's and for 1980 they are 1981's.

Note: The rates for 2020 were 1.10 in Singapore (provisional), 0.87 in Hong Kong (provisional) and 0.84 in Republic of Korea (provisional).

# Part 1 Current Status of Countermeasures against the Declining Birthrate

## Chapter 1 Current Status of the Declining Birthrate

- The total fertility rate of Japan was 1.36 in 2019. Among the 47 prefectures, 36 prefectures exceeded this rate. Okinawa had the highest total fertility rate (1.82), followed by Miyazaki (1.73). The lowest was Tokyo (1.15), followed by Miyagi (1.23).



Prefecture	2019 (Final) (a)	2018 (Final)	2005 (Final) (b)	Change (a)-(b)
Hokkaido	1.24	1.27	1.15	0.09
Aomori	1.38	1.43	1.29	0.09
Iwate	1.35	1.41	1.41	▲ 0.06
Miyagi	1.23	1.30	1.24	▲ 0.01
Akita	1.33	1.33	1.34	▲ 0.01
Yamagata	1.40	1.48	1.45	▲ 0.05
Fukushima	1.47	1.53	1.49	▲ 0.02
Ibaraki	1.39	1.44	1.32	0.07
Tochigi	1.39	1.44	1.40	▲ 0.01
Gunma	1.40	1.47	1.39	0.01
Saitama	1.27	1.34	1.22	0.05
Chiba	1.28	1.34	1.22	0.06
Tokyo	1.15	1.20	1.00	0.15
Kanagawa	1.28	1.33	1.19	0.09
Niigata	1.38	1.41	1.34	0.04
Toyama	1.53	1.52	1.37	0.16
Ishikawa	1.46	1.54	1.35	0.11
Fukui	1.56	1.67	1.50	0.06
Yamanashi	1.44	1.53	1.38	0.06
Nagano	1.57	1.57	1.46	0.11
Gifu	1.45	1.52	1.37	0.08
Shizuoka	1.44	1.50	1.39	0.05
Aichi	1.45	1.54	1.34	0.11
Mie	1.47	1.54	1.36	0.11
Shiga	1.47	1.55	1.39	0.08
Kyoto	1.25	1.29	1.18	0.07
Osaka	1.31	1.35	1.21	0.10
Hyogo	1.41	1.44	1.25	0.16
Nara	1.31	1.37	1.19	0.12
Wakayama	1.46	1.48	1.32	0.14
Tottori	1.63	1.61	1.47	0.16
Shimane	1.68	1.74	1.50	0.18
Okayama	1.47	1.53	1.37	0.10
Hiroshima	1.49	1.55	1.34	0.15
Yamaguchi	1.56	1.54	1.38	0.18
Tokushima	1.46	1.52	1.26	0.20
Kagawa	1.59	1.61	1.43	0.16
Ehime	1.46	1.55	1.35	0.11
Kochi	1.47	1.48	1.32	0.15
Fukuoka	1.44	1.49	1.26	0.18
Saga	1.64	1.64	1.48	0.16
Nagasaki	1.66	1.68	1.45	0.21
Kumamoto	1.60	1.69	1.46	0.14
Oita	1.53	1.59	1.40	0.13
Miyazaki	1.73	1.72	1.48	0.25
Kagoshima	1.63	1.70	1.49	0.14
Okinawa	1.82	1.89	1.72	0.10
Across Japan	1.36	1.42	1.26	0.10

Source: Vital Statistics, MHLW

# Part 1 Current Status of Countermeasures against the Declining Birthrate

## Special Topic:

## The effects of COVID-19 on countermeasures against the declining birthrate and responses to these

### 1. Spread of COVID-19

### 2. Changes in the numbers of marriages, pregnancy notifications and live births

- In the midst of the spread of COVID-19, a decline in the number of marriages and pregnancy notifications is observable.

Note: The number of marriages (preliminary figures) in 2020 was 537,583 (a decline of 12.7% compared to the previous year).

Note: The aggregate number of pregnancy notifications between January and October 2020 was 727,219 (a decline of 5.1% compared to the previous year).

- With regard to live births too, based on the time from pregnancy to birth it is considered that the impact of COVID-19 started around December 2020.

Note: The number of live births (preliminary figures) in 2020 was 872,683 (a decline of 2.9% compared to the previous year).

- Looked at from a long-term perspective, in addition to the fact that the number of marriages and live births are both continuing to decline, it is considered possible that the spread of COVID-19 is likely to have had a certain degree of impact upon marriages and pregnancies, and this trend will need to be carefully observed in the future.

### 3. Main initiatives in countermeasures against the declining birthrate in response to COVID-19

While carefully observing the impact that COVID-19 has upon the marriage/childrearing generation and paying close attention to their anxieties, initiatives are taken to prepare an environment in which people can marry, become pregnant, give birth and rear children with peace of mind.

#### (1) Marriage

- With regard to the Newlyweds Lifestyle Support Program to assist new lifestyle accompanying marriage, the age and income conditions are relaxed and enhanced. (The applicable age for the program is raised from 34 or younger to 39 or younger, and the applicable household income raised from around less than 4.8 million yen per annum to around less than 5.4 million yen per annum), etc.

#### (2) Pregnancy/childbirth

- Comprehensive support close to expectant and nursing mothers is implemented through the introduction of telephone and online consultation support and health guidance.
- With regard to group health examinations for infants, which are tending to be avoided, support is implemented in order to change the examinations to individual checkups, etc.

#### (3) Childrearing

- The requisite costs are supplemented in order that staff can thoroughly pursue infection countermeasures while continuing to operate nursery centers, kindergartens, etc. or implement community programs for child and childrearing support, etc.

### 4. Germination of new ties and support amid the spread of COVID-19

- Support for marriage: Implementation of online marriage partner search events.

- Creation of new forums for interaction between parents and children: Online childrearing support to prevent isolation among parents and children in communities where “stuck at home childrearing” continues to be experienced.

- Continuation of learning: Online learning support for children in households below the poverty line.

## Main initiatives in countermeasures against the declining birthrate in response to COVID-19

- The number of marriages and pregnancy notifications is trending downwards as COVID-19 spreads.  
Note: The number of marriages (preliminary figures) in 2020 was 537,583 (a decline of 12.7% compared to the previous year). The aggregate number of pregnancy notifications between January and October 2020 was 727,219 (a decline of 5.1% compared to the previous year).
- While carefully observing the impact that COVID-19 has upon the marriage/childrearing generation and paying close attention to their anxieties, initiatives are taken to prepare an environment in which people can marry, become pregnant, give birth and rear children with peace of mind.

Note: Created based on the 3rd supplementary budget for FY2020 and the draft budget for FY2021. The amounts in parentheses are the initial budget amounts for 2020.

#### Marriage

- Countermeasure-focused subsidies to declining regional birthrate

- (2 billion yen composed of 3rd supplementary & initial budget)
- With regard to the Newlyweds Lifestyle Support Program, in consideration of the impact upon marriage of economic shock and anxiety over the future due to COVID-19, the program is enriched through, for example, the relaxation of age and income conditions (the age of 34 or under is raised to 39 or under and household income raised from around 4.8 million yen per annum to around 5.4 million yen per annum).
- Focused support is provided for the sophistication of partner matching systems using AI and so on. (The subsidy rate is raised from half to two-thirds), in addition to which new initiatives and COVID-19 are pursued including online marriage support and childrearing consultation.

- Job placement support for new graduates etc.

- (90 million yen under 3rd supplementary budget, 10.2 billion yen under initial budget (8.7 billion yen))
- Individual support through job placement support navigators is implemented for students etc. who cannot adequately search for jobs or face anxieties

#### Childrearing

- Support for infection prevention measures at nursery centers, kindergartens, etc. or during community programs for child and childrearing support

- (Included in 3rd supplementary budget of 6.52 billion yen (Cabinet Office), 2.4 billion yen (MEXT), 11.7 billion yen (MHLW))
- The requisite costs are supplemented in order that staff can thoroughly pursue infection countermeasures while continuing to operate these facilities.

- Support through the High School Supplemental Scholarship Fund

- (15.9 billion yen under the initial budget (13.6 billion yen))
- Support is implemented for educational costs other than tuition fees for households in which the family budget has drastically decreased since FY2020.

- New Support System for Higher Education Tuition

- (480.4 billion yen under initial budget (488.2 billion yen))
- It is possible to apply for support at any time in the event that COVID-19 has caused drastic changes to family budgets.

#### Pregnancy & childbirth

- Comprehensive support for expectant and nursing mothers and infants

- (4.6 billion yen under 3rd supplementary budget)
- Consultation support and health guidance are implemented by telephone and online for expectant and nursing mothers feeling anxiety and in difficult situations, childrearing support is provided for expectant and nursing mothers for whom traveling to their hometowns to give birth is difficult due to COVID-19, and support is implemented for infants for whom arranging group health examinations is difficult.

- Support for initiatives towards the introduction of a paid leave system under the Maternal Health Management Measures

- (500 million yen under initial budget)
- In order to develop a working environment in which pregnant working women can take leave and give birth with peace of mind, and continue to play an active role in the workplace even after childbirth, as part of the Maternal Health Management Measures regarding COVID-19 subsidies are provided to employers who have introduced paid leave and allowed leave to pregnant workers who require it according to the guidance of doctors etc.

- Support program for Corporate-sponsored Babysitter Users

- (780 million yen under initial budget (580 million yen))
- Usage subsidies are improved in order to make babysitter dispatch services easier to use for people with a variety of ways of working.

- Support measures for smooth transition to employment for disadvantaged groups including mothers and non-regular employees

- (Included in 3rd supplementary budget of 210 million yen, included in initial budget of 83.14 billion yen (included in 124.11 billion yen))
- The consultation support system at Hello Work (Public Employment Security Office (PESSO)) is expanded, matching assistance for mothers at Mothers' Hello Work and so on and eager searches for job offerings implemented, trial employment subsidies increased and the promoting of staff to regular employees using career advancement subsidies encouraged, through all of which employment support is implemented that addresses the needs of people looking for jobs who have unavoidably lost their jobs due to the impact of COVID-19.

Note: In addition to the above, there are emergency funds and emergency medical treatment special care fees, home care services benefits are paid and paid to those in danger of losing their savings, and support is provided for those whose lives have become difficult due to the impact of COVID-19.

Note: In addition, in line with the Outline of Measures for a Society with Declining Birthrate (issued by the Cabinet on May 20, 2020) while giving consideration to addressing COVID-19, as well as watching changes in the post-COVID-19 social economy, citizens' lifestyles and their perceptions and behaviors, comprehensive measures regarding the society with a declining birthrate are boldly pursued according to the five steps of marriage, pregnancy, childbirth and childrearing.

### Chapter 1 Key Challenges

#### Section 1 Creation of an environment in which the marriage/childrearing generation can envisage prospects into the future

Detailing in main the measures taken in FY2020 regarding the specific state of implementation of measures relating to the declining birthrate in line with the framework of the Outline of Measures for a Society with Declining Birthrate (decided by the Cabinet on May 29, 2020).

1. Development of an employment environment in which the young generation can maintain prospects for the future
2. Support for those wishing to marry
3. Development of an environment in which both men and women can balance work and childrearing
4. Support for the reemployment of women who have left work due to childrearing, and support for participation in community activities
5. Encouragement of male participation in housework and childcare
6. Reforms in both working styles and lifestyles

#### Section 2 Responding to needs of diversified childrearing families

1. Support regarding childrearing (financial support, mitigation of mental and physical burdens etc.)
2. Support for households with large numbers of children and multiple birth children etc.
3. Seamless support from the stage of pregnancy through to the childrearing stage
4. Diversification of childrearing providers and inter-generational help

#### Section 3 Promotion of meticulous initiatives appropriate to regional circumstances

1. Support for local governments' initiatives regarding marriage and childrearing
2. Promotion of initiatives connected with regional revitalization

#### Section 4 Creation of a society friendly to marriage, pregnancy/childbirth, children and childrearing

1. Building up of social momentum for supporting those wishing to marry and caring for the childrearing generation
2. Improvement of facilities and environment to make it easier for pregnant women, mothers and children to go somewhere.
3. Effective diffusion of information concerning marriage, pregnancy/childbirth, children and childrearing

#### Section 5 Enthusiastic utilization of science and technology results and new resources

1. Encouragement of the utilization of scientific and technology results such as ICT and AI etc. in the fields of marriage support and childrearing

### Chapter 2 Measures at each life stage

#### Section 1 Before marriage

1. Support for life planning
2. Development of an environment to support life events of the younger generation

#### Section 2 Marriage

1. Stable economic basis
2. Support for comprehensive marriage support initiatives by local governments etc.
3. Work style reforms to assist life plans

#### Section 3 Pregnancy and childbirth

1. Support from before pregnancy
2. Seamless support from the pregnancy stage through to childrearing
3. Development of an environment in which women can become pregnant and give birth safely and in peace of mind

#### Section 4 Childrearing

1. Child and childrearing support
2. Financial support for childrearing and mitigation of educational costs
3. Work style reforms to balance work and childrearing
4. Development of an environment in which both men and women can balance work and childrearing, promotion of female advancement
5. Encouragement of male participation in housework and childrearing
6. Diversification of childrearing providers and inter-generational help
7. Support for households with large numbers of children and multiple birth children etc.
8. Housing support, town planning paying consideration to childrearing and supporting children's healthy growth
9. Development of an environment in which children grow up healthily, safely and in peace of mind
10. Support for children and families in diverse situations including children with disabilities or living in poverty, and one-parent homes
11. Building up of social momentum for supporting childrearing throughout the whole community
12. Appropriate utilization of ICT and AI in the childrearing area

## **Promotion of initiatives under the Outline of Measures for a Society with Declining Birthrate (main initiatives for FY2021)**

With regard to putting into practice the Outline of Measures for a Society with Declining Birthrate (decided by the Cabinet on May 29, 2020), introduces the main initiatives established under the FY2021 budget including those incorporated in the Policy on Social Security Reform for All Generations (decided by the Cabinet on December 15, 2020).

## **Establishment of taxation measures relating to childrearing support costs**

Introduces the taxation measures relating to childrearing support costs (excluding from taxation the subsidies for babysitter usage costs provided by local governments) approved in response to the FY2021 request for tax revisions.

## **Improvements of Newlyweds Lifestyle Support Program**

Introduces the improved content concerning the FY2021 coverage conditions of the partial support programs for subsidy amounts paid by the central government to local governments in order to support the local governments' assistance, aimed at newlywed households, for the costs involved in starting a new life upon marriage (such as renting new housing, moving expenses etc.).

## **National Council on Marriage Support**

Introduces presentations and case studies provided by experts at the Council, which was held online in February 2021, and is aimed at those in charge of marriage support in local governments and private body marriage supporters such as NPOs.

## **Participation in childrearing by fathers in the new lifestyle**

Introduces the example of Mie Prefecture, which has taken as an opportunity the change in perception of and behavior regarding how to spend time with the family and childrearing due to the impact of COVID-19, and sought to build up a momentum for promoting fathers' participation in childrearing.



## **Towards new developments in multifunctional regional childrearing support**

Introduces a case where comprehensive support for children and childrearing families is provided, in which the Mori No Hiroba childrearing support center in Saitama Prefecture's Kuki City collaborated with neighboring certified child centers and achieved a one-stop service from pregnancy through to school age.

## **Diversification of childrearing providers in the community through the participation of NPOs and older generations**

Introduces the initiatives implemented by Shiogama City in Miyagi Prefecture, Komatsu City in Ishikawa Prefecture, Kyoto Prefecture, Kagawa Prefecture and the Ai-Port Station NPO in order to encourage participation by NPOs and energetic and keen older people, promote diversification of childrearing providers and support childrearing families throughout their communities.

## **Promotion of declining birthrate measures appropriate to regional circumstances**

Introduces the state of the declining birthrate in regions from the perspective of each prefecture, city, town and village. Also introduces, in the light of the fact that it is thought there are regional disparities in the state of declining birthrates and their causes and issues, cases studies in which developments by local governments in collaboration with related departments and agencies are underway for environments in which it is easy to marry, become pregnant, give birth and rear children according to regional circumstances.

## **Family Day & Family Week**

Introduces the proceedings of the Family Day Online Forum 2020 held in November 2020, and the message from Tetsushi Sakamoto, Minister of State for Measures for Declining Birthrate, that was distributed on the specially created Family Day and Family Week website.



## **The International Attitudes Survey on the Society with a Declining Birthrate**

Introduces the results of a survey conducted among 20- to 49-year-old men and women in Japan, France, Germany and Sweden on their perception of the life stages of love, marriage, pregnancy/childbirth and childrearing, and the results of an international comparison of the impact that COVID-19 has had on marriage, pregnancy/childbirth and the burdens of childrearing.

## **Towards the development of a working environment in which infertility treatment is easy to undergo**

Introduces the content of the Policy of Future Initiatives on the Development of a Working Environment in which Infertility Treatment is Easy to Undergo, which were compiled in December 2020 by the Team to Make Examinations towards the Development of a Working Environment in which Infertility Treatment is Easy to Undergo, co-chaired by Tetsushi Sakamoto, Minister of State for Measures for Declining Birthrate and Norihisa Tamura, Minister of Health, Labour and Welfare, and sub-chaired by Hiromi Mitsubayashi, State Minister of Cabinet Office and Junko Mihara, State Minister of Health, Labour and Welfare.

